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Executive Secretary

American Friends Service Committee Inc.

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10/18/77

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RFS/IPS
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director
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Exemption(s):
Declassify: () In Part () In Full
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President Jimmy Carter
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Carter:

As one who was encouraged by the tone of the statements made after your meeting with President Videla of Argentina, it is with great dismay and urgency that I now write about recent news we have received from that country.

The cases of eight prisoners in particular has been brought to our attention. They are: SUSANA PIOLI, EDITH STAHELLI de FRIAS (both held in Villa DeVoto Prison); JUAN GONZALEZ, EDUARDO GONZALEZ, RUBEN PIAZZA, EDUARDO GRUTSKY, OSVALDO GASPARINI (held in Sierra Chica Prison), and JULIO VARELA (recently transferred from Sierra Chica to LaPlata Prison).

These eight were arrested in Azul, Province of Buenos Aires, on November 10, 1974. Except for the case of SUSANA PIOLI, who was never charged with any specific crime, all of these men and women will have completed their three year sentences on November 10 of this year. We are most hopeful that in fact all be released when that date comes.

However, we are deeply troubled by reports which indicate that at least four of these prisoners have been subjected to mistreatment and undue punishment in Sierra Chica Prison within the past several weeks. We are distressed by the news that one of them "disappeared" from the prison for ten days, during which time no one knew of his whereabouts. Everything points to the fact that he was harshly treated, perhaps tortured, during that period. The news also indicates that two others were punished with solitary confinement for no particular reason, under conditions that can be described as totally inhumane. Severe health problems have apparently resulted for both.

Mr. President, you spoke recently of the assurances you had received from President Videla that the excesses of the Argentine security forces and prison personnel would be curbed. Yet these developments indicate that for at least some political prisoners the conditions are getting worse.

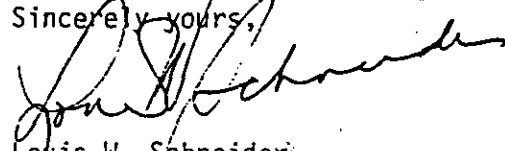
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The American Friends Service Committee is dedicated to the attainment of justice, peace, and well-being for all people. It is in this spirit that we appeal to you to communicate immediately with the Argentine government on behalf of these prisoners in particular and on behalf of the safety of all prisoners. We urge you to call on the Argentine government to reinstate the constitutionally-guaranteed "right of option to leave the country", through which these and many other prisoners should gain their legally deserved freedom.

Sincerely yours,


Louis W. Schneider
Executive Secretary

LWS:at

cc: Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State
Warren M. Christopher, Assistant Secretary of State
Pat Derian, Human Rights Co-ordinator, Department of State
Terence Todman, Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs
Marc Schneider, Human Rights Office, Department of State